

1 1. A method of playback of stored entertainment content, comprising:
2 notifying a service provider of a playback of the stored entertainment content;
3 receiving an advertisement from an advertising server; and
4 merging the advertisement with the stored entertainment content so that
5 both the advertisement and the stored entertainment content are played back.
6

7 2. The method according to claim 1, wherein merging the advertisement with
8 the stored entertainment content comprises inserting the advertisement in place of
9 a stored advertisement forming a part of the entertainment content.
10

11 3. The method according to claim 2, wherein the inserting takes place during
12 real-time playback of the entertainment content.
13

14 4. The method according to claim 1, wherein merging the advertisement with
15 the stored entertainment content comprises inserting the advertisement at a
16 location of an advertisement place holder forming a part of the entertainment
17 content.
18

19 5. The method according to claim 4, wherein the inserting takes place during
20 real time playback of the entertainment content.

1 6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the stored entertainment content
2 is stored at a service provider site.

3
4 7. The method according to claim 1, wherein the stored entertainment content
5 is stored in a set-top box.

6
7 8. The method according to claim 1, wherein the stored entertainment content
8 is stored in storage device coupled to a set-top box.

9
10 9. The method according to claim 1, further comprising transmitting a viewing
11 history to the service provider prior to receiving the advertisement.
12

1 10. A method of delivering advertisements to a user, comprising:
2 receiving a message from a set-top box indicating initiation of playback of
3 stored entertainment content;
4 selecting an advertisement based on a user profile for the user; and
5 transmitting the advertisement to the set-top box to be merged with the
6 entertainment content.

7
8 11. The method according to claim 10, further comprising merging the
9 advertisement with the stored entertainment content.

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11 12. The method according to claim 10, further comprising merging the
12 advertisement with the stored entertainment content by inserting the advertisement
13 in place of a stored advertisement forming a part of the stored entertainment
14 content.

15
16 13. The method according to claim 12, wherein the inserting takes place during
17 real-time playback of the stored entertainment content.

18
19 14. The method according to claim 10, further comprising merging the
20 advertisement with the stored entertainment content by inserting the advertisement
21 at a location of an advertisement place holder forming a part of the stored
22 entertainment content.

1 15. The method according to claim 14, wherein the inserting takes place during
2 real-time playback of the stored entertainment content.

3
4 16. The method according to claim 10, wherein the stored entertainment content
5 is stored at a service provider site.

6
7 17. The method according to claim 10, wherein the stored entertainment content
8 is stored in a set-top box.

9
10 18. The method according to claim 10, wherein the stored entertainment content
11 is stored in a storage device coupled to a set-top box.

12
13 19. The method according to claim 10, further comprising receiving a viewing
14 history from the set-top box prior to selecting the advertisement.

15
16 20. The method according to claim 10, wherein the selecting further comprises
17 selecting the advertisement based upon information relating to the stored
18 entertainment content being played back.

19
20 21. The method according to claim 10, wherein the selecting further comprises
21 selecting the advertisement based upon a playback time.

1 22. The method according to claim 10, wherein the selecting further comprises
2 selecting the advertisement based upon a playback date.

3
4 23. The method according to claim 10, wherein the selecting further comprises
5 selecting the advertisement based upon information relating to a viewing history of
6 the user.

7
8 24. The method according to claim 23, wherein the viewing history is transmitted
9 from the set-top box to a service provider.

10
11 25. The method according to claim 10, wherein the selecting further comprises
12 selecting the advertisement based upon information relating to an advertising
13 history for the user.

14
15 26. The method according to claim 10, wherein the selecting further comprises
16 selecting the advertisement based upon user profile information relating to a
17 plurality of users.

1 27. A set-top box, comprising:

2 an input interface receiving a signal indicating that a user has initiated a
3 playback of stored entertainment content;

4 means for notifying a service provider of the initiation of the playback of
5 stored entertainment content;

6 means for receiving a selected advertisement from the service provider; and
7 a programmed processor that merges the selected advertisement with the
8 entertainment content so that the entertainment content is played back with the
9 selected advertisement.

10
11 28. The apparatus according to claim 27, wherein the programmed processor
12 that merges the advertisement with the stored entertainment content comprises
13 means for inserting the advertisement in place of a stored advertisement forming
14 a part of the entertainment content.

15
16 29. The apparatus according to claim 28, wherein the means for inserting inserts
17 the advertisement during real-time playback of the entertainment content.

18
19 30. The apparatus according to claim 27, wherein the programmed processor
20 that merges the advertisement with the stored entertainment content comprises
21 means for inserting the advertisement at a location of an advertisement place
22 holder forming a part of the entertainment content.

1 31. The apparatus according to claim 30, wherein the means for inserting inserts
2 the advertisement during real time playback of the entertainment content.

3
4 32. The apparatus according to claim 27, wherein the stored entertainment
5 content is stored at a service provider site.

6
7 33. The apparatus according to claim 27, further comprising a disc drive forming
8 a part of the set-top box, and wherein the stored entertainment content is stored in
9 the disc drive.

10
11 34. The apparatus according to claim 27, wherein the stored entertainment
12 content is stored in storage device coupled to the set-top box.

13
14 35. The apparatus according to claim 27, further comprising means for
15 transmitting a viewing history to the service provider prior to receiving the
16 advertisement.

1 36. A system for delivery of advertisements, comprising:
2 means for receiving a message from a set-top box indicative of a user's
3 selection of playback of stored entertainment content;
4 a user profile server for storing a user profile of the user;
5 an advertisement server receiving the user profile and supplying an
6 advertisement selected in accordance with the user profile; and
7 means for transmitting the advertisement to the set-top box for merged
8 playback with the entertainment content.

9
10 37. The apparatus according to claim 36, further comprising a media server that
11 merges the advertisement with the stored entertainment content before
12 transmission to the set-top box.

13
14 38. The apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the merging of the
15 advertisement with the stored entertainment content is carried out by inserting the
16 advertisement in place of a stored advertisement forming a part of the
17 entertainment content.

18
19 39. The apparatus according to claim 38, wherein the inserting takes place
20 during real-time playback of the entertainment content.
21

1 40. The apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the merging of the
2 advertisement with the stored entertainment content is carried out by inserting the
3 advertisement at a location of an advertisement place holder forming a part of the
4 entertainment content.

5
6 41. The apparatus according to claim 40, wherein the inserting takes place
7 during real time playback of the entertainment content.

8
9 42. The apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the stored entertainment
10 content is stored in a media server at a service provider site.

11
12 43. The apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the stored entertainment
13 content is stored in the set-top box.

14
15 44. The apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the stored entertainment
16 content is stored in a storage device coupled to a set-top box.

17
18 45. The apparatus according to claim 36, further comprising means for receiving
19 a viewing history prior to selecting the advertisement.
20

1 46. The apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the selecting further
2 comprises selecting the advertisement based upon information relating to the
3 content being played back.

4
5 47. The apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the selecting further
6 comprises selecting the advertisement based upon a playback time.

7
8 48. The apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the selecting further
9 comprises selecting the advertisement based upon a playback date.

10
11 49. The apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the selecting further
12 comprises selecting the advertisement based upon information relating to a viewing
13 history of the user.

14
15 50. The apparatus according to claim 49, wherein the viewing history is
16 transmitted from the set-top box to a service provider.

17
18 51. The apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the selecting further
19 comprises selecting the advertisement based upon information relating to an
20 advertising history for the user.

1 52. The apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the selecting further
2 comprises selecting the advertisement based upon user profile information relating
3 to a plurality of users.
4

Patent

1 53. An electronic storage medium storing instructions which, when executed on
2 a programmed processor, carry out a process of playback of stored entertainment
3 content, comprising:

4 notifying a service provider of a playback of the stored entertainment content;

5 receiving an advertisement from an advertising server; and

6 merging the advertisement with the stored entertainment content so that
7 both the advertisement and the stored entertainment content are played back.
8

9 54. The storage medium according to claim 53, wherein merging the
10 advertisement with the stored entertainment content comprises inserting the
11 advertisement in place of a stored advertisement forming a part of the stored
12 entertainment content.
13

14 55. The storage medium according to claim 54, wherein the inserting takes
15 place during real-time playback of the stored entertainment content.
16

17 56. The storage medium according to claim 53, wherein merging the
18 advertisement with the stored entertainment content comprises inserting the
19 advertisement at a location of an advertisement place holder forming a part of the
20 stored entertainment content.
21

1 57. The storage medium according to claim 56, wherein the inserting takes
2 place during real-time playback of the stored entertainment content.

3
4 58. The storage medium according to claim 53, wherein the process further
5 comprising transmitting a viewing history to the service provider prior to receiving
6 the advertisement.

1 59. An electronic storage medium storing instructions which, when executed on
2 a programmed processor, carry out a process of delivering advertisements to a
3 user, comprising:

4 receiving a message from a set-top box indicating initiation of playback of
5 stored entertainment content;

6 selecting an advertisement based on a user profile for the user; and

7 transmitting the advertisement to the set-top box to be merged with the
8 entertainment content.

9
10 60. The storage medium according to claim 59, wherein the process further
11 comprises merging the advertisement with the stored entertainment content.

12
13 61. The storage medium according to claim 59, wherein the process further
14 comprises merging the advertisement with the stored entertainment content by
15 inserting the advertisement in place of a stored advertisement forming a part of the
16 stored entertainment content.

17
18 62. The storage medium according to claim 61, wherein the inserting takes
19 place during real-time playback of the stored entertainment content.
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21

1 63. The storage medium according to claim 59, wherein the process further
2 comprises merging the advertisement with the stored entertainment content by
3 inserting the advertisement at a location of an advertisement place holder forming
4 a part of the stored entertainment content.

5
6 64. The storage medium according to claim 63, wherein the inserting takes
7 place during real-time playback of the stored entertainment content.

8
9 65. The storage medium according to claim 59, wherein the selecting further
10 comprises selecting the advertisement based upon information relating to the
11 entertainment content being played back.

12
13 66. The storage medium according to claim 59, wherein the selecting further
14 comprises selecting the advertisement based upon a playback time.

15
16 67. The storage medium according to claim 59, wherein the selecting further
17 comprises selecting the advertisement based upon a playback date.

18
19 68. The storage medium according to claim 59, wherein the selecting further
20 comprises selecting the advertisement based upon information relating to a viewing
21 history of the user.
22

69. The storage medium according to claim 59, wherein the selecting further comprises selecting the advertisement based upon information relating to an advertising history for the user.

70. The storage medium according to claim 59, wherein the selecting further comprises selecting the advertisement based upon user profile information relating to a plurality of users.

1 71. A method of doing business, comprising:
2 receiving an advertisement from an advertiser;
3 receiving a target profile defining the type of viewer that should receive the
4 advertisement;
5 receiving notification from users indicative of playback of entertainment
6 content;
7 providing users with the advertisement based upon similarities between a
8 user profile and the target profile, the advertisement being provided by merging the
9 advertisement with the entertainment content; and
10 calculating a charge to the advertiser based upon the number of times the
11 advertisement is provided to users.

12
13 72. The method according to claim 71, further comprising calculating the charge
14 based upon times that the advertisement is provided to users.

15
16 73. The method according to claim 71, wherein the entertainment content is
17 stored at a service provider site.

18
19 74. The method according to claim 71, wherein the entertainment content is
20 stored in a set-top box.
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1 75. The method according to claim 71, wherein the entertainment content is
2 stored in a storage device coupled to a set-top box.
3

4 76. The method according to claim 71, wherein providing the advertisement is
5 further based upon a viewing history for the user.
6

7 77. The method according to claim 71, wherein providing the advertisement is
8 further based upon information relating to the entertainment content being played
9 back.
10

11 78. The method according to claim 71, wherein providing the advertisement is
12 further based upon a playback time.
13

14 79. The method according to claim 71, wherein providing the advertisement is
15 further based upon a playback date.
16

17 80. The method according to claim 71, wherein providing the advertisement is
18 further based upon information relating to an advertising history for the user.
19

20 81. The method according to claim 71, wherein providing the advertisement is
21 further based upon user profile information relating to a plurality of users.
22